

To: **The Executive**  
**12 December 2023**

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**Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy**  
**Executive Director of People**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To endorse the Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027 and governance arrangements for implementation of the strategy.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027 be endorsed.
- 2.2 That a more detailed Action Plan be compiled which will be subject to review and approval by the Executive Director together with the portfolio holder Cllr Iskandar Jefferies.

**3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)**

- 3.1 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a Serious Violence Duty on specified authorities within a local government area. As part of the Duty, a strategy is required to be prepared, publicised and implemented:

'In order to prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, the partnership must collectively develop a strategy which should outline the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to address the drivers identified in the strategic needs assessment'.<sup>1</sup>

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 No alternative options have been considered for the following reasons:
- The Duty is laid down in law
  - This first Serious Violence Strategy for Bracknell Forest is a commitment to work effectively across organisational and professional boundaries to deliver a truly multi-agency approach. It is vital that relevant services work together, share information and target interventions effectively.
  - Serious violence reduction and prevention is a multi-agency process which is best co-ordinated through a strategy
  - Serious violence has a devastating impact on lives of victims and families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society.

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<sup>1</sup> [Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142227/serious_violence_duty_statutory_guidance.pdf)

## 5 Supporting Information

### Background to the Strategy

- 5.1 In April 2018, the government published its [Serious Violence Strategy](#) in response to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide across England. Action in the strategy is focused on [4 main themes](#):
- tackling county lines and misuse of drugs
  - early intervention and prevention
  - supporting communities and local partnerships
  - law enforcement and the criminal justice response
- 5.2 The strategy has a call to action to partners from across different sectors to come together in a multi-agency public health approach to tackling and preventing serious violence at a local level.
- 5.3 To help local areas implement a whole system multi-agency approach, the government introduced a range of initiatives including a new [legal duty](#) to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence.
- 5.4 The [World Health Organization \(WHO\) 4-step public health approach to reducing violence](#) aims to improve health and safety for people by addressing the risk factors that increase the likelihood that someone will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. The 4 steps (with the Bracknell Forest response shown in bold) are:
- Surveillance: define the problem through collecting information and data about violence. **(A Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment for Bracknell Forest has been completed).**
  - Identify risk and protective factors: use research to look at the causes of violence, what's linked to it, risk factors for violence and where interventions could be effective. **(These are included in the Serious Violence Strategy).**
  - Develop and evaluate interventions: to find out what works in preventing violence by designing, implementing and evaluating interventions. **(The Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit is leading on this work for all areas in the Thames Valley).**
  - Implement effective interventions: also monitor the effects of these interventions on risk factors and evaluate their impact and cost-effectiveness. **(Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a member of the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit and has access to evaluations undertaken. The Serious Violence Strategy also sets out a recommended local approach to responding to and preventing serious violence. There are other local interventions which are suggested under the Strategy's Recommendations).**

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations of the Strategy can be found on pages 25-32 of the attached Strategy.

## Next Steps

1. The Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategic Sub-Group of the CSP will now work within the recommendations contained in the Strategy to develop an action plan which will be the framework for partners to deliver against local ambitions.

## **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 6.1 The legal issues are addressed within the report.

Part 2 of the Police, Crime and Sentencing Act 2022 sets out the duties of specified authorities for a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. Section 8(3) of the Act states the specified authorities must:

- (a) identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area,
- (b) identify the causes of serious violence in the area, so far as it is possible to do so, and
- (c) prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area.

In preparation of the strategy there should be relevant consultation; and once a strategy has been prepared it must be published and kept under review.

### Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications.

### Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 The CSP and its Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategic Sub-Group have been consulted and are in support of the content and recommendations contained in the Strategy. The Strategy also captures views from the community on serious violence and these can be found in the chapter 'Peoples' Voices'.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Attached

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 By completing a Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy, Bracknell Forest Council is complying with the duties placed upon it by law.

In addition, without an understanding of our local profile of serious violence as well as a co-ordinated and collaborative approach set out through objective setting and a work plan to monitor progress, prevention and response is reduced.

#### Climate Change and Ecological Impacts

- 6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have little or no impact on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> as meetings will be held on a virtual platform. In the event any in-person meetings occur, we will be taking steps to reduce waste by encouraging members and partners to use public/active travel to get to the venue, minimise printing by promoting the use of digital copies and encouraging the use of sustainable and re-useable refreshment resources.

#### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 The health and wellbeing considerations of serious violence are best summarised as below:

‘Serious violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing<sup>2</sup>’.

‘Interventions, especially those in early childhood, not only prevent individuals developing a propensity for violence but also improve educational outcomes, employment prospects and long-term health outcomes. Tackling violence and its root causes can improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and have wider positive implications for the economy and society<sup>3</sup>’.

‘From a public health perspective preventing children and young people from becoming perpetrators or victims of violence is a key consideration to avoid escalating levels of harm to both children and wider society<sup>4</sup>’.

#### Background Papers

Bracknell Forest Serious Violence Strategy Appendix 1

Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix 2

#### Contact for further information

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<sup>2</sup> [Preventing serious violence: summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> [A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)